

# Gifted Webinar 1 | Feasibility Studies Transcript

**Amy:** Welcome everyone, thank you for joining us. I'm Amy Stevens, I'm the Chief Exec at Gifted and I'm joined here with Chris Goldie my fellow director and we're talking through planning for a major project today. So, conducting that vital feasibility work during this really strange time and the challenges of that, but also how you can still go through that and come out the other side with a solid plan. Please do submit questions at any time through the Q&A function. We're going to answer all questions at the end, well, as many as we can sorry. But please do send them through at any time, Chris will be monitoring those, and we'll go through them towards the end. Hopefully the tech is working: we will see. Like I say, if there's any problems pop something in the chat or pop something on the Q&A and please do bear with us. With regards to the questions, we will – hopefully- be able to unmute you when we address your questions so you can kind of follow up with any further queries and see if we've kind of answered it satisfactorily. So, we'll get started.

First of all, we are working with the challenges of COVID-19: what are they? And I think we can all understand these within the fundraising world is that we've lost that face to face contact in terms of being person to person obviously we can be it online as we are now but it doesn't quite have that same personal nature as being able to meet people one on one, face to face and have you know those important conversations with people. And that runs through to wider scale events, cultivation events, fund raising events as well. There's the obvious financial uncertainty, and that's both for organisations within the third sector themselves but also the donors. You know, the people are experiencing different levels and different challenges at the moment, of income. Some organisations are doing incredibly well both third sector organisations and others, but for others it's a really challenging time and we don't know when that is. So when will it be over? Again, it's a question we just can't answer at the moment. We've had a bit more clarity I think within the last few days. Really this is a changing situation. All of us – and that does pose the challenges of how you kind of schedule fundraising programs and time scales – which we will address for you. And also: is it the right time to be talking about money? There is a lot of nervousness at the moment within the third sector in terms of talking about giving and asking and you know is it the right time and how do we do that sensitively so as to maintain those relationships with supporters without causing offense and with getting the best results for the organisation? And finally, the question: can you afford to wait? So, you know, if as an organisation you sit tight now – let's say you don't do anything until September – what has that achieved? Will that achieve anything for your organisation or is it just wasted time? And that's some of the elements we're going to be looking at. So, Chris, use this time wisely... do you want to touch on this?

**Chris:** I can happily chat on this. The important thing from our perspective talking to the clients that we're working with currently looking at each different scenario is that everybody needs to be able to move once restrictions are lifted and we are able to get back to somewhere near normality. So, what do we need to be doing? What can we use this time realistically for? Well, it's clearly a great time to be developing strategy - to be looking at things that have been going well, to be looking at the things that haven't been going so well, and to try and make sense of the new world that faces us and what will and wont work as

we move out of lockdown into this sort of semi state of activity and then hopefully by maybe the autumn or certainly by the start of next year into somewhere that's more reflective of where we will have been used to over the last number of years. So, it's a time to develop your strategy, it's a time to cultivate your best prospects. We're finding that people are around and available: they're available to talk, lots of people are working from home which means they probably have more time: travels been taken out. So, it's a good time to maintain connections. Just to catch up with people – find out how they are: just build those relationships that we know are so important when it comes to major gift fundraising. It's also a great time to be conducting research, not only to make sure that you understand what your current supporters be they grant makers, business, are doing, but equally just to dig a little bit deeper into what they may have supported before, what their interests may be, where their networks are. It's really a question of using the time as wisely as you possibly can to find out as much as you can about your prospects, be they individual or institutional. And if you do all that successfully and use this time rewardingly, what you're really doing is building a springboard for future success. You're really laying down that solid foundation that will enable you to move swiftly back into fundraising as and when you need to.

And I think that is the fundamental message to be working through at this moment. It's very sad to know that a lot of fundraisers have been furloughed by their charities because actually this is a time which can really be used constructively so those of us who are working, those of you who are very much still engaged whether you're looking at a major capital project that may have been delayed or whether it's just about rebuilding a major gift program or a legacy program, now's the time to start planning it so that you're absolutely ready to go as and when you want to. Amy back to you.

Amy: Completely agree, and just to reiterate, now is absolutely not the time to do nothing. As Chris says, we need to use this time really wisely. It's a great time to do all those jobs that you never normally have time to do because you're so busy with the fundraising programs that are continually moving. Like Chris says, do that research, spend that time to get your head into something and work through your strategy. And we saw this back in 2008 with the financial crisis. Those charities who didn't down tools, who ploughed on, who thought "right let's make a plan, this is a changed situation, we need to look at how the future works", they're the ones who came out the other side flying and were successful and for others who kind of hunkered down and did nothing, they then had to rebuild themselves in a changed environment: a changed world. And it's exactly the same situation now. Now is not the time to do nothing, let's use the time wisely... and think about feasibility. So, can you do a feasibility study now? Why would you do a feasibility study now? Chris is going to talk us through some of the steps.

Chris: As you all know, a feasibility study is the fundamental first step in any planning of any major project. Without it you can find yourself floundering around trying to understand where the money might come from without the relevant, the important leadership in place. And generally, just guessing what might be as opposed to assessing what will be through a feasibility study. So, it's the essential first step when planning any type of major project be that capital, revenue, be that a legacy program – whatever that might be – you need to undertake that bit of research. And what do we mean by a feasibility study? What are we hoping to achieve? What questions are we hoping to be answered? Most importantly is do

other people share the same vision as your organisation. It's absolutely critical that your donors, your prospects believe what you believe. And we've all worked on lots of projects before where you know it's a great idea and everybody running the organisation thinks it's a fabulous idea but actually the people who you need to back it don't share that view and if they don't share that view, they're simply not going to give you any money or they may give you some money but it won't be as much as they might do. So, the reality is you really need to use the study to understand do they share your vision, do they share your ambition, and can they enhance that vision and ambition? That will help to form an opinion as to whether the target itself is a realistic one. You know, are your financial aspirations genuinely real? We've all worked, and again, Amy and I have worked on projects where we have had to turn around to clients and say "you know what guys, you want to raise £3m and it isn't happening: you haven't got the potential to do that". Happily, that isn't always the case and equally happily, very often what we're able to do is to be able to say "look. you may not be able to raise £3m but we genuinely think you can raise £2m: can your project be adapted or where might you find that other funding from". But it's really important before you start investing time and money and energy on another fundraising campaign: do you have a realistic target? And to help to drive that is: where is that money going to come from? Who are your sources? Not just your leading donors – we'll come onto those in a second – but more often: which institutions might support you? There's a lot of stuff out there about grant makers and how generous they may or not be. But actually, you've got to be very precise in your approach to grant makers. You've got to understand that just because you're in a sector and, you know, that sector generally commands lots of support from the trust and foundation database, does it mean that your project necessarily will? It may not tick the right boxes, so be very honest in the appraisal of that and use the study to be able to understand where that money is going to come from. Who will your leading donors be and where will your fundraising volunteer leadership be? Those really go hand in hand, not always but more often than not, because what we're really trying to establish during a study is who is going to help you, from a volunteer perspective, to achieve those fundraising dreams. Now that may be an education of your board who probably weren't recruited to fundraise and therefore don't think it's their responsibility through to a development group of may have relatively low aspirations and now are faced with a major project to deal with. Your study needs to understand what they individually think about the proposition and more importantly whether they are prepared to give to it, and are they prepared to help you secure the money? Are they prepared to go out and cultivate others? If the answer categorically from a majority of people during a study is "no they are not" then you've probably got quite a big problem. If on the other hand three or four of them are up for the challenge, you've got a pool of people to work with. You've got a campaign board in the making. You've got the opportunity to start developing networks through your volunteer leadership and at the same time genuinely identify who your major donors are likely to be. And then the final piece that's really a key question for any study is just how long is this going to take? Again, very often we are approached by clients who almost want to do it tomorrow. They've got a building they need to open, if it's a school they've got one academic year to raise £2m. Well, realistically, is that likely to happen? The only way you're going to find that out is by doing a study. You all know this, you've all been through that process, but I'm just reminding you now because actually, if you analyse that, and as we will come onto in a minute, these are all questions that can be asked remotely. You don't need to sit in front of somebody face to face and have that conversation. Videoconferencing

clearly helps: you can look at somebody clearly in the eye. It's never going to replace sitting in a room with them but actually you can get a pretty good feel for where they are coming from. What do you get at the end of a study? You get a target that's reachable, attainable. You get prospects who have been qualified. You've been able to do your research around... you've been able to understand why they are going to give, what motivates them to give and perhaps very importantly where they might sit on your scale of giving. You're almost certainly going to have a core leadership group. It may only be two or three people to begin with. But you know two or three people can grow into five or six and when you've got five or six effective members of a campaign board, you've probably got a pretty successful campaign ahead of you. And most importantly, at the end you've got an action plan for success. You've got a roadmap that's going to take you from where you are now to where you want to be at the end of your capital campaign. Very often, the study is most useful for we professional fundraisers of which we all are in this webinar now, to persuade our bosses – those who aren't engaged in fundraising on a day-to-day basis – that this *is* possible, that the campaign can be achieved. It will help them to have confidence in you as fundraisers in the investment that they need to make as trustees or as a board. And that's built around the successful, effective, feasibility study report that delivers clear evidence and proof that a campaign target can be met, and a campaign can be won.

Amy: Completely, agree and, I think one of the challenges we know a lot of development workers, fundraisers find is convincing their board, trustees, leadership, to invest in a feasibility study. And it is difficult because ultimately, the feasibility study we don't directly ask for money during that phase – yes we find out where it might be - but it doesn't have an end outcome of cash in your bank however it is vital if you're launching a major campaign. And whether that's capital for a building or a revenue campaign so is it a new bursary program? Is it a legacy campaign that you want to run? The feasibility work: if you skip that it can have a massive impact on your long-term fundraising. And that's the message for the leadership who are making that commitment and investing is: this will give an evidenced plan. So, it actually greatly reduces the risk further down the line of; wasted resource, of embarrassments that your campaign didn't go as planned so it really is a crucial first step. So, the feasibility study "How", Chris.

Chris: Yeah, so this is the plan. Again, you probably are all fully aware of this, but I'll run through them very quickly. Your case for support tells your story. That sets out the ambition. It is shared with the interviewees before and in such a way that you can go into any conversation and they know what you're talking about. A really important tool of any campaign going forward but actually during the feasibility study being able to talk from the same place with interviewees is really important to whomever is doing the interviews. And it also gives them an opportunity to feed it: to make them feel as if they've got a sense of engagement and involvement in the project. If they see, later down the line that their advice has been taken, their views have been listened to, that the case may have been tweaked to reflect those views it's going to motivate them even more to give. The scale of giving, as you all know, is something that sets out how a target might be achieved. It focuses on security the majority of funding from a smaller number of people. It's a tool that face-to-face we use very often just to get indication, quite subtly, while people pointing at the certain levels, talking about certain levels of where their own thoughts may be. Particularly if you map out the scale of giving, the benefits of gift aid, the benefits of pledge giving,

because those are the questions they will ask. So very simply, ok so 'if I was to give £20,000/year for four years, ok, I see it – you add the gift aid, the school, the church, the cathedral – whatever – gets £100,000.' That's great, but actually it's only costing me £60,000 because I am a higher-rate tax payer or less, or you know, even less if you're an ultra-high rate tax payer. These things are really important in starting build and cultivate support amongst the interviewees. We're not asking for money in interviews, but we are giving them the opportunity to start to map out and start to think about how they might support. Obviously, the interviews are confidential. Very important that they are reassured that they are confidential so they can speak very openly and honestly and candidly. We need that and you need that. You need to know: you can never assume that an individual – simply because on the face of it he or she may have a lot of money – are actually (a) inclined to give you that money and (b) may not even have that money at all and I quite recently had one of those when I was sent by a client to see somebody who they were absolutely convinced was going to be their leading donor and literally the first thing they said to me was 'People think we're rich and we're not. It's family money and we don't control it.' And that really helped to refocus the campaign moving forward. As we've talked about before, this is a great time to do that desk research, whether it's to grant makers, whether it's to individual profiles or even local businesses in some cases. For larger organisations we're seeing online surveys introduced. Not something that we were necessarily doing 5-10 years ago but we are very much doing now when the audience demands. It's a great way of engaging with the grass roots. So, if you take a school environment or a large membership organisation who, you know are not going to be giving a lot of money, but actually you need them to be involved – not least from the publicity perspective. Just having an online survey, independently done, anonymous, just helps you to build a picture of what grassroots supports might look like, and therefore how you can then build the community phase of your campaign going forward. It ends up, as we said before, in the written report, and will take around ten to twelve weeks. Coming back to the written report, this can be presented – it will always be done in full – but it can be reduced down to a PowerPoint to help the brevity of the meeting. The 10-12-week thing, if I can just pause on that for a second. We're find at the moment that with video interviews being far more prevalent and obviously the impossibility of face-to-face meetings with people in public and in their offices, actually we're probably able to complete studies a little bit quicker now. The process doesn't take as long. We're all sitting around as we are now, at home, at our desks looking at a computer: you don't have the hassle of travel, people can slot you in more easily. So it reinforces slightly, particularly if you've got a project that, maybe delayed because of COVID now you can still do the study work, you can get that done *now*. You can really get that done and get through it and get a really decent report. It gives you more time then to think about and reflect on what you need to do next. Amy, back to you.

Amy: Thank you. So, the study during lockdown. Can we do this during lockdown? And the answer is: absolutely. As Chris has said, there's really nothing that can't be delivered through video conferencing, through telephone calls etc right now so, you know, creating the case for support, the scale of giving is all desk work. The interviews – you know – yes it's nice to be in a room with people, it's nice to be able to gauge how people are feeling which you don't get the same over video call but we can still have those conversations. And those conversations at the moment might take a slightly different angle and be less direct because people do have financial challenges right now. And feasibility studies now should address

that. They should be talking to donors about how they feel about the current situation and as they come through it how will they feel about giving so that we can really plan into our future campaigns how that works and what the ask looks like and what the case for support looks like as we go forward. Obviously, the research can be done and yes, we'd love to sit round a table to talk through reports and presentations, but it can be easily done either through this kind of format or on a simple video call to present that to team. So absolutely can happen now. And what are some of the benefits of going through a study now. We are in this strange new normal as everyone keeps talking about. But you know it looks like this is around for a while so we need to work about how this is going to happen and the benefits are that we do have these video calls and conferences that are really easy to run and deliver interviewees are definitely more accessible as Chris said so people are working from home, finding, you know we can slot in at any time, no travel, there's no holidays so this summer its highly unlikely that we're going to get any kind of mass exodus July August which is normally quite a tricky time for a feasibility study – because everyone goes on holiday – we're not going to have that this year. So actually, now is a good time to look at feasibility. As Chris said there is that quicker completion. I'm seeing it with a client of mine at the moment who is going through a feasibility study and it's not just the interview process, its being able to meet with the client and review progress and clear action points on a weekly basis. So ordinarily we might travel to see a client during a study once every three weeks, its actually very easy to log on for an hour a week: "right what did we achieve this week: are we where we need to be?" and actually this study is moving on a lot quicker than it might do ordinarily because of this online situation. There's the renewed sense of altruism. So, people want to do good things at the moment: they want that feel-good feeling. And it's a good way to bring your supporters along with you through feasibility and talk about what can be achieved in the future and the good things that could happen. Doing it now puts you ahead of the game, as we discussed. So let's not waste this period of lockdown, this period of downtime, let's use it to complete really important work like this, so that when we come through this and things are a bit more flexible, and fundraising becomes a bit easier again you're ahead of the game, you're ready to roll and you can get on, deliver your programs, raise the funds you need to. And also, it gives people things to look forward to so, dependent on sector as well, we're seeing different levels of interest in projects, so obviously originally starting from March it was all health related, NHS, hospices that is still a huge focus. But people now are starting to think "oh gosh what would I love to do when this is all over" you know "I would love to go back to my theatre that I go to every week and actually if we don't plan and we don't support it, it's not going to be there. And now we need to make that happen, so it is still there for enjoyment" so it actually gives us a lot to look forward to as we move forward. Chris do you have anything to add or should I skip slide?

Chris: Just a couple of things. On that last point about things to look forward to, you know, a lot of people we know a lot of clients and potential clients have been planning major capital projects which now they feel they need to delay for various reasons, and that's perfectly understandable, but actually you have to remember at all times that whether its parents at a school or patrons at an arts centre or worshippers at a church or cathedral: we all look forward to new things, new developments, better theatres, new facilities at school, better facilities in our cathedral or our church and actually we *don't* want to wait for those. You know, we want those to happen as soon as they realistically can. And I'm finding in the

conversations I'm having with people during feasibility studies at the moment that there's a real sense of – and maybe it's built around this revived sense of altruism in people genuinely – whilst they are naturally a little bit cautious about how much money they will be able to give, they're not perhaps as inclined to definitively state they're going to give at a certain level, they nevertheless absolutely do not want the project to be delayed. And that's a real advantage for us and I think that those organisations who are pausing through the summer months and that are sort of planning to pick up again in September are going to find projects put back by six months to twelve months. Those who are working now are going to be ready to do. It may mean a more intense campaign but that will be possible if people share that sense of – you know – we really want to see this happen because we're looking forward to the opening of this building, we're looking forward to the opening of this facility and I think that's a really important hook when we talk to potential interviewees, both to ask them to be involved, but actually when you have the independent conversations with them, this is the time to be saying: you know, we want to make this happen in the timeframe that you will want it to be. And if that works, that's a tremendous benefit to all of us to do the process at this moment in time.

Amy: Okay. So, moving on to that critical question: will people want to talk now? Chris.

Chris: Yeah, look. It's obvious that you have to be sensitive in your approach. This is not a time to be going in and being quite strong in your ask for major sums of money. Yes, there are people out there who will not have been badly affected by this situation. In fact, as we know, there are probably people out there who are benefitting hugely from the current situation. But the reality is, in general, approach your prospects with great sensitivity. Be fully open and accepting of them turning around to you and saying, "you know what, it's a great idea but I can't even think about this till January." At least if you know that now, let's hope it will determine your strategy going forward. But from your perspective what you're doing is stressing that this is a great time to be planning and it's more important now than ever before. Money is going to be tight so therefore if you're going to do a major fundraising campaign, you have to do it properly. That's why you need their views *now* so that you get it right in the future. They tell you what they're thinking, what their friends are thinking, what their connections are thinking. That helps you to produce the best strategy for when you can start fundraising again. It's very important that you listen; that we understand how your supporters are thinking now about their life post-COVID. They may have been affected personally by it, tragically by it, financially by it, you know, there are all sorts of ways. And the purpose of the study, above anything else, is almost to understand the mindset of your prospects, to understand the way that they're feeling and thinking. We've talked a moment ago about the optimism and positivity that comes from having things to look forward to. That's also got to be reflected in a little bit of reality here. You know, they have just gone through a particularly difficult time and that may just mean that they're not – you know, if they were originally prospect number one – maybe they're prospect number five. But to understand that at this stage is going to be really important to you when you move into the fundraising later on. A reminder to them that – you know – a study is not an ask for money. So even if they've got concerns around their financial situation, that doesn't mean the study can't go ahead. Because actually what we're truly trying to understand are attitudes towards the project and the principle of support rather than the support itself. And then – this is a very relevant one, this is one that I've been involved with at a different level –

where there's a major building project going on with an organisation that I'm involved with – that you know, if they delay because of COVID, it could cost them £4-5m more. Now, that's a very large project, it's a multi-million-pound project, but scale that down to any level, that's still a significant proportion of cost. And delays will increase project costs. We're going to move into uncertain times, we know, about taxation and government funding and all the rest of it ... some things we can help to control. And those are making sure that project costs aren't significantly increased because we've delayed for six months when we didn't need to. Anything else, Amy, on that?

Amy: No, I think we're covered there. We'll move onto some case studies. So just to talk through a few of our clients and what they're doing at this time (clients we're working with now). So, Peterborough Cathedral have really embraced that thought that we addressed earlier of, you know, this will be wasted time, we cannot hunker down now. And they're actually planning for sustainability whilst at the same time looking at what new fundraising programs can be built for the future. And actually, I think that's a really strong message at the moment, that donors will appreciate that, you know, it's not about necessarily, snatching at the money that's available now. It's about: "how do we make a sustainable future? This has impacted everybody, and we need to look at how we build as an organisation and retain our supporter base and enable us to operate long into the future. So, like I say, they're using this downtime to really get that plan in place so that – come the autumn when things start to happen again – and hopefully, worship will resume in the summer months at some point that they're ready to go and they have a clear evidenced program that they can start to deliver. North Yorkshire Moors Railway, slightly different. So, I've been working with them on creating a fundraising strategy. They've had major capital programs underway; done very well with funding from national lottery heritage fund etc but never really had an established fundraising program. So, we were looking at what that would look like and testing the feasibility. Obviously then COVID-19 hit, and for an organisation like that that relies almost solely on visitor income: huge impact. So, they launched a crisis appeal as many organisations have done at this time which is going really well, but instead of just focusing on that and thinking 'oh goodness, this is the situation we're in now, how can we get money? What do we do?' They've also recognised that this impacts on the future. So, part of our role in supporting them as client now is looking at how that crisis appeal dovetails into their future fundraising program and planning that now. So again as they come through the crisis appeal and we all come through the chaos that is COVID-19, they still have their new strategy for fundraising at the end and it hasn't been negatively impacted by activity they've carried out through the crisis appeal in the summer. And that's really important at this time I think, to not just think about the here and now. We'll use this time to think about what you do in the here and now and how that impacts the future and what that will look like as well. Chris?

Chris: Yeah, so, the Society of Chemical Industry – I don't know if any of you are familiar with it – but an old, mid-nineteenth century organisation of... that seeks to link chemistry and chemists to big business. So pretty much every – I wasn't really aware of this until I got involved a few months ago, not being a scientist by any stretch of the imagination - Chemistry pretty much sits at the heart of anything. You know, whether you're talking electric batteries for cars, whether you're talking about the development of plant-based foods, so environmental challenges, whether you're looking about the research that's going



on to find a vaccine for the COVID virus, again, chemistry sits at the heart of this so it's very much an organisation that has established itself over the years and around the world as being influential, popular – around 6,000 members at different levels. But it has never needed to fundraise before. And now it's facing up to 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges and wants to start to build a long-term fundraising strategy, built around four major themes. Three of those being fundamentally important scientific themes. We were nervous because they're a relatively large organisation who are all suddenly having to adjust to home working and abandoning the office in Belgravia and all the rest of it for a period of time. We were nervous that they might want to pause and actually we couldn't have been further from the truth. They absolutely bought into that this was the best time to be doing this sort of work. What it has meant is that we are able to work with some of their staff more closely; to be able to mentor them in areas of research that they weren't particularly good at before or hadn't done before; engage with their board members and really try and drive and focus in on those themes. Not least because one of them in particular is incredibly relevant. So, you know, this is an organisation that wants to build capacity in the sector for intellectual research and also practical application of chemistry to cures and solutions to some of the world's major problems. It's a very topical theme and they're going to use this time very wisely to make sure that they get this fundraising strategy right. At the other end of the spectrum, although again with great ambitions a state school in Oxfordshire, Lord Williams's School who are the first client that's come to us really during the lockdown and commissioned a report because they have a project, they have great ambitions albeit a state school that's relatively new to fundraising but they understand that if they want to hit their timeframe and look forward to the opening of the performing arts centre in two and a half, three years' time, that they need to be ready to start fundraising soon. And therefore the study is going ahead, its going ahead with every conceivable aspect of interviews, online surveys so that we're engaging with as many people as we possibly can so that ideally completed by the end of June they can then spend July and August planning and be ready for hopefully when the new school year starts in September to start the private phase of what will inevitably be a long campaign. But a good example in the current situation of a client who is recognised that a study is possible that they can be done and that it needs to be done if they're to meet their timeframes. And those of you who've worked in the school's sector will understand that you're working always to a very specific annual deadline. You know, if you miss a deadline in an academic year, you'll almost certainly be pushed back by at least a term if not longer. And so, it's really important for them that they crack on with it at this time. So just four case studies there that maybe reflect how different that we're working with are using this time to build their fundraising capacity for the future.

Amy: Excellent. So, we will move onto some questions if there are any there.

Chris: There are none written yet Amy, so we need people to either write or go around individually and ask to see if they've got questions it might be the best way of doing it.

Amy: Does anybody want to submit anything through the Q&A? Sorry. Skipping through. Okay.

Chris: Lindsay. Lindsay thank you so no questions, but it has given you food for thought. Anybody got any specific questions they'd like to ask? If so, please let us know. Is there

anything you don't feel we've covered? Was there any advice that you were hoping for that you maybe haven't heard that you would like to push us or test us on? Any particular challenges that you're facing at the moment that you would do with our support and... Thank you Carol again! By the way, Carol asked earlier will we send this round – we will do. Obviously.

Amy: We will. Hopefully this is recording. We'll soon find out, but it should be. And we'll be uploading those onto our website. So, they'll be accessible for people in due course. And as Chris said, after this, if you've mulled it over and thought "ah actually, what about that?" Contact details are here and they're all on our website as well. Get in touch with us: more than happy to have a chat – one on one chat with you if there's questions you want to ask that you don't want to ask online or that you think of later to talk through your specific situation and if that can help at the moment. I think we do have a question come through, Chris.

Chris: Ah. Alright. Anonymous: what would we need to ensure that we're able to cultivate our best prospects? Amy do you want to have a go at that first or do you want me?

Amy: I've been speaking to clients a lot about this at the moment: about how do you keep people engaged at this time? I was speaking to medical client recently who have lots of very high net-worth funders investing in new programs at hospital and their fundraising team is understandably really nervous that they don't lose that engagement. And the kind of things they're looking at is a really small group of live Q&A with one of the clinicians so they can directly ask the questions about – you know – how is the project progressing at this time? What is happening with this technology etc? Dependant on your organisation in a medical setting obviously, you need that support from the leadership of the clinicians because as fundraisers we can't necessarily answer that level of tech at that time. So that's one way of doing things. We've had other clients sending personal messages – video messages – on their email bulletin to give it that more personal nature. So yes, we can't gather people together in rooms and give presentations but actually there's lots of creative ways that people are finding to still engage their prospects and keep them on board. And as Chris touched on earlier, the feasibility study is a really good way to do that because you're asking them to invest in your project not financially at this time, but to give you the critical feedback you need to be able to formulate that case in the right way and to deliver the project in the right way. And that in itself is a really important form of cultivation: enabling people to give you their input and their advice. Would you add anything Chris?

Chris: No, very much the same. If you take an arts context, it may be the time to think about those handpicked invitations to a few people to kind of share the cup of coffee and a chat over zoom with your artistic director or chairman of the board of governors or pick a theme and just give your best prospects and donors that sense that they're very much involved and that you're thinking about them; that you're giving them the opportunity to stay connected. Obviously – you know – we live in a world where the internet enables us to put lots of information out there. We can update websites daily, we can tweet about things, we can post things on Instagram or Facebook or wherever else it might be. But when you're talking about the people who've been your best regular supporters who you need to remain on board going back to the principle that we've always espoused that those who've given

before are most likely to give again. When you're back fundraising properly, you want their support to kickstart your fundraising again so really makes sure that they feel that you haven't forgotten about them during this period. They don't have to attend: just getting the invitation itself might be enough. But as we said before – lots of people are sitting around at home, looking for things to do, looking for interaction with other people and this may just be something that they'll want to participate in. The next question has come from Zoe which says: do we think the national lottery heritage fund will reopen its grant programs any time soon? I think the simple answer to that Zoe is that we don't know but I would doubt it. Amy might know a bit more.

Amy: Yeah, I spoke to them actually last week on a conference call with another client and the regional officer we were speaking to there said: 'really until the end of 2020, its highly unlikely.' And we know that the national lottery heritage fund when they have a review of programs it takes quite a while to then issue that guidance. Her feedback to us was: the programs that come out post-COVID will be different, the outcomes will remain the same in terms of it will still be about engaging people in heritage and engaging new groups in your heritage. But critically they will want to see how organisations are addressing working in the new world. Because it could be in the winter – dreaded thought – but that we have another resurgence of COVID. So how do programs look? How can you still deliver interaction with your heritage and your activities etc in a changed world? So she did give us that advice that that will be happening so it's something to think about as you do your project planning but in terms of new applications for heritage projects that aren't COVID-related, so aren't immune to emergency funds, 2021 is what we've been told.

Chris: Ok thank you. There's another question come in now which says: 'if our board does not have the appetite to invest in a feasibility study, is there a lighter-touch approach we could take internally to help persuade the board that the feasibility is a good investment?' Simple answer is: Yes, there is. We have found in the past that there are two approaches to this. One is to either find other people who have done a feasibility study to start to feed in the relevant reference or the value of having done the study. The other is to identify somebody on the board who you think is more open to the view and get them to engage in the concept and the discussions around why a feasibility study might take place. So actually, the persuasion is coming from a peer rather than a member of the fundraising team. I think we've all been there, that... that situation where as fundraisers you know that the study is the right thing to do but your bosses – be that a head teacher be that an artistic director or board of governors – are saying "but hang on we're being asked to spend money on something that's not going to directly produce any results". Well you need to prove them wrong but obviously you need to do that with diplomacy and tact and therefore you need to recruit allies who can help you do that from within that leadership group. Amy?

Amy: Yeah, just to add, is, like we said before, it's about reducing risk further down the line because the risk you face by not doing a study is reputational damage and not raising your target because you've gone about it in the wrong way.

Chris: And wasted investment. Fundraising campaigns cost money, whether they're done purely by an internal team or whether you bring somebody – in addition – to run the campaign, there is an investment required that we would say normally runs between five

and fifteen percent of the campaign target. And we've seen a lot of clients dive into campaigns – spend a lot of time, energy and money – and not get anywhere because they haven't done a study. And when they do a study, or they pick it up half way through and do a review, and they refocus and they're able to start again they achieve their results that much more quickly. But how do you persuade? Because Ros has also asked the same question: how do you persuade the board? You've got to get people on your side. You've got to get allies from the peer group that make the decisions to understand that and I think it is in doing that you've got to research it, you've got to go to people and say – you know – “I've spoken to this theatre or that church or this cathedral or that school and they've done the study and they found it really valuable because...” and then take that forward to others. And that will help to persuade people.

Amy: And I would say as well, it's not about – as a development professional, as a fundraiser – you not being able to do it or have the skills to do it because quite often boards will say “well why don't you just do it? Why do we need to appoint somebody else to do it?” But having an external party to feasibility work for you gives you a different viewpoint as well but quite often people are more honest if talking to a third party, rather than – you know – let's say, it's the head of a school – you know – is a parent really going to say that they think he's a terrible speaker or that the project's – you know – chaos and actually they should be focusing on X Y and Z. They're far more likely to give their honest feedback on the case, on the fundraising target to somebody from outside the organisation rather than within.

Chris: And I'll give you one example of that in a recent study. My first study interview I did of an assignment quite recently around a school and I went in to see a guy who was very wealthy and who'd been a big donor of the school previously and the first thing he said to me was “I'm only seeing you because I want you to give to the school again because...” and then he listed the reasons why and they were all very valid reasons and actually that helped me to pick up the same theme with other old boys of the school and therefore at the end give the school some very good advice around what they needed to do to bring the old boys back on side. They simply weren't aware of it and I said to them “haven't you told the school this” and he said “well I can't be bothered” you know “I don't feel... you've given me the opportunity to do it and I'm happy to do it to you”. And I just think what he really meant was that he could say it to me without fear of any sort of come back, retribution, embarrassment whatever else it might be. And it was really important, the school's taken it on board and boy have they improved their relationships with alumni ever since. Any more questions any one? No. Amy back to you.

Amy: Well, we're perfectly on time – almost, 10:47 – so if there's no further questions we will call it a day now but like we say, it will be recorded and online for you to review and do come back to us if you've got any other questions. Our colleague, Julie, will put out an email to all those who attended to ask for your feedback so as Chris said earlier, if there is anything that – you know – you think we haven't touched upon that you would have liked us to we're learning through this process as well, we want to give the best advice possible so do let us know and hopefully we'll be able to address those in future webinars so thank you ever so much everyone for joining us and hopefully we will see you all soon.

Chris: Yes, take care everybody thanks you very much for coming along.

Amy: Yeah, stay well.

Chris: All the best.